



Arizona Elks Association

Thursday, May 20, 2010

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Good morning!

I am delighted to be with you.

In preparation for my remarks, I noted that Leland sent along to my office not long ago your May edition of the Elks Magazine.

It featured an article titled, "Should You Delay Retirement?"

I am not quite sure if that was a HINT or not, but I should tell you that my answer to that question is ... YES, I AM delaying retirement.

I haven't finished my job.

I am here to tell you this morning, before I leave the Governor's office, our Arizona will be made right, its course will be straight and true, its future brimming with revived promise.

That task is not an easy one, because for five high-rolling years before I took office, the system grew government as large as possible.

I faced a state budget deficit of nearly five billion dollars across two fiscal years.

I faced a federal government whose unfunded mandates and sweetheart deals were stealing Arizona's freedom and threatening to bankrupt our state.

Well, the Arizona comeback started in earnest on Tuesday when voters approved Proposition 100, telling us our faith in them was well placed.

They told us they understood the depth of the financial crisis in Arizona.

They told us they understood doing the RIGHT thing, almost always means doing the HARD thing.

And, Tuesday, voters DID the hard thing.

They told us they did it for our educational system, for our universities and community colleges, for our public safety and for our most vulnerable.

I am grateful to all who supported our efforts, but, I well understand the honorable position of those who OPPOSED the temporary tax increase. And I recognize Proposition 100 isn't a cure-all.

Though we've streamlined and reduced the size of government more than at any time before in state history, we are still faced with difficult choices.

But, we have aggressive pro-growth job creation programs about to reach their stride. We also have a very important Commission on Privatization and Efficiency, also known as the COPE commission, that will look extremely hard for ways to save more taxpayers dollars and help us continue to bring down the cost of government.

We are focused on getting Arizona back on track -- bolstering our base industries -- advancing our competitive position in the global economy.

Recently, I announced the Arizona Department of Commerce would be replaced by an authority governed by a private-sector led "Economic Advancement Board."

It will be focused on growing and diversifying our economy, and totally dedicate itself to creating and attracting more quality jobs for Arizonans.

We will now have a comprehensive approach -- one for the 21st Century -- one yielding Focused Priorities -- Focused Investment -- and Focused Efforts targeted on industries -- such as solar, science, technology and aerospace and defense.

I have also launched a Jobs Action Team -- Commerce -- State Land -- the Departments of Environmental Quality and Revenue -- are all working together to cut through red tape and speed what has been a slow government process.

I am committing ten million dollars of my discretionary funding -- through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 -- to establish a Job Training Assistance Program.

I am pursuing a combination of regulatory and tax reforms.

For the long-term, we're re-thinking areas of our tax structure that unduly burden our employers -- particularly those requiring large capital investments, such as manufacturing.

Arizona is making great strides in its approach to renewable energy -- especially in solar.

Last summer, I signed legislation creating the renewable energy tax incentive program. Companies are interested -- and they are coming to Arizona.

So, you tell me, are we starting to win?

You bet we are.

We've attracted well over one billion dollars in capital -- twenty-five new companies or expansion projects -- yielding quality growth with more than twenty-four-hundred jobs.

And, we've done much more:

-- "Operation Clean Sweep" has inmates picking up trash along our highways.

-- Our ArizonaSERVES Task Force is coordinating statewide volunteer efforts with faith-based and community organizations assisting those in need in our communities.

-- We've resolved the long-standing issue involving residential encroachment around Luke Air Force Base making it clear to the Defense Department that Arizona stands ready for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter mission.

The healthcare bill passed by Congress epitomizes the lack of understanding in Washington with plight of the states and business.

That is why I am joining with other states to sue the federal government to stop the unprecedented federal takeover of the health care system.

With its onerous federal mandate, Congress has exceeded its authority and left Arizona no option but to challenge its unconstitutional act in federal court.

And the total costs of their mandates will require Arizona to spend some twelve billion dollars over the next ten years -- more than double the size of today's General Fund to pay for their programs.

We MUST join this suit to ensure Arizona has a voice in the legal proceedings.

This is just too important for our State to sit back and do nothing.

The same is true for border security.

From my first days in office as Governor, I have been demanding that Washington fulfill its primary obligation to the citizens of our state: to secure our southern border, to enhance the rule of law, and to protect Arizonans and all Americans from violence committed by organized crime syndicates, out-of-control drug cartels, violent human smugglers, and common criminals.

Legislation I signed into law recently -- Senate Bill 1070 -- does not regulate differently than current federal law, nor does it pre-empt federal law in any way.

No new or additional documents are required to visit Arizona.

The same documents that the federal government currently requires for legal immigrants are required under the state law.

The bill, supported by statewide law enforcement organizations, provides local sworn officers the same legal tools provided to federal authorities and their local law enforcement partners for many years.

I am deeply disappointed by some who would suggest that additional economic penalties against our state are the solution.

How could further punishing families and businesses large and small be a solution or be viewed as constructive?

How could a state's enforcement of a misdemeanor offense that is copied verbatim from federal law be dismissed as hateful?

Respect for the rule of law means respect for every law.

I will enact this new law with the same respect, responsibility, and commitment to the protection of civil rights that I successfully enacted Arizona's law requiring voters to be citizens and to provide I.D.

Racial profiling, or any racial discrimination, is abhorrent and is specifically against the law in Arizona.

I believe every one of us wants to be safe, and I refuse to compromise on the protections of civil rights and public safety.

So, tell me, aren't these steps in the right direction?

But, wait, there's more:

- We've curbed the Regulatory State – my first official act as governor was to order a moratorium on state regulations.
- We've protected the Sanctity of Life.
- We've supported Arizona as a Right-to-Work State.
- We've done away with Political Correctness – returning Christmas and Hanukah to the Capitol.
- We've protected Second Amendment Rights -- expanding gun owner rights to carry firearms while respecting private property rights.
- We've brought traditional values back to our young people, restoring abstinence-only sex education in our schools.
- And we've supported traditional marriage.
- I championed HB 2195 – allowing charitable groups to play pull-tabs in their halls – after developing a workable solution this year and, with your help, ensuring that the bill passed through the Legislature.

Now, I'm not aiming to please everyone.

I am aiming to lead this Arizona Comeback – to win the future for our children and grandchildren.

Wilford and Edna Drinkwine – my parents -- were the whole world to me. They were common Americans who worked hard, asked for nothing in return, and made silent sacrifices for the common good.

I am their proud daughter who understands that the call to public service is higher than any partisan purpose.

I am restoring Arizona – committed to its comeback -- based on our common values, cultivated in the soil of self-sacrifice.

Abraham Lincoln said, (Quote) “The struggle of today is not altogether FOR today; it is for a vast FUTURE also. With a reliance on Providence, all the more firm and earnest, let us proceed in the great task which events have placed upon us.” (Unquote)

So, let us proceed in the great task of making Arizona our STRONG AND SHINING HOME.

Thank you. God bless you and your families, and may God bless this great state of Arizona.